

of guard and reserve members make possible the contributions of our citizen soldiers. By supporting the mobilization of patriots, employers are demonstrating their own patriotism.

With us today are representatives of companies that have given outstanding support to the Guard and to the Reserve. Central Atlantic Toyota Distribution Center, D.H. Griffin Wrecking Company, Miller Brewing, Pacific Gas and Electric Corporation, Tyson Foods are all winners of this year's Secretary of Defense Employers Support Freedom Award.

These companies do all their utmost to support and encourage service in America's National Guard and Reserve. They provide pay, health care benefits, and job security to the men and women who are called to active duty. They recognize that their workers are fighting to keep America free.

Other companies are making equally important contributions. Albertson's, Clear Channel Airports, Home Depot, and Verizon all provide outstanding support to their employees during mobilizations. All of us appreciate the generosity and the public spirit shown by these outstanding companies and many others like them around our country.

Members of the guard and reserve are with us today. We're proud of your service. We thank you for your sacrifice. The war on terror has drawn on many of America's strengths, and one of the greatest strengths is the citizen-soldier, like Specialist James Dexter of the Illinois National Guard. At

home, Specialist Dexter is a volunteer firefighter. In Iraq, he is serving as a military police officer. On three separate occasions in a single month, Specialist Dexter rushed to the scene of traffic accidents, twice saving the lives of American soldiers and Iraqi citizens and once putting out a dangerous fire. He was awarded the Bronze Star. He has earned the gratitude of our country for his service.

America needs the Guard and Reserves more today than we have had in decades. We're at war. Yet we're fortunate that so many of our citizens have heeded the call to serve a cause greater than themselves. And we are fortunate that our Guard and Reserve units have received such support from America's business community. As a sign of America's gratitude, I'm pleased to invite representatives from the nine companies here today to join me in signing a proclamation designating National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week.

May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our great country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:16 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rear Adm. David Janes, USN (Ret.), National Chair, National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The proclamation of November 14 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Senate Action To Block Votes on Judicial Nominations *November 14, 2003*

Today's partisan action to block up-or-down votes on Justice Priscilla Owen, Judge Carolyn Kuhl, and Justice Janice Rogers Brown is inconsistent with the Senate's constitutional responsibility and is just plain

wrong. Once again, a partisan minority of Senators has thwarted the will of the majority and stood in the way of voting on superb judicial nominees.

These obstructionist tactics are shameful, unfair, and have become all too common. At a time when the American people have important issues backlogged in the courts, partisan Senators are playing politics with the judicial process at the expense of timely justice for the American people.

I commend Senate Republicans, especially Leader Frist, Chairman Hatch, and Senator Santorum, for their leadership and commitment to the Constitution and basic fairness. During their 40-hour debate, these

Senators have focused on the damaging vacancies that exist on the Federal courts of appeals, the highly qualified individuals I have nominated to serve, and the Senate's obligation to vote on every judicial nominee.

No matter who is President or which party controls the Senate, the American people deserve a well-functioning, independent judiciary and a commitment by all Senators to live up to their constitutional obligation.

Statement on Congressional Action on Comprehensive Energy Legislation *November 14, 2003*

I applaud the House and Senate for reaching agreement on a comprehensive energy bill. America will be safer and stronger with a national energy policy that will help keep the lights on, the furnaces lit, and the factories running. A good energy bill is part of my six-point economic

plan to create the conditions for job creation and a sustained recovery. By making America less reliant on foreign sources of energy, we also will make our Nation more secure. I commend the Congress for its hard work on this important issue.

Memorandum on Return of Activated Military Members to Federal Civilian Employment *November 14, 2003*

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Return of Activated Military Members to Federal Civilian Employment

As we welcome home returning Federal civil servants who were called to active duty in the continuing Global War on Terrorism, we recognize the contributions they have made in the defense of freedom. Whether they served with the Reserve Forces or the Air and Army National Guard, each of them has my personal gratitude and the respect and admiration of a grateful Nation.

The Federal Government will continue to be the model for employer support to

the Guard and Reserve. We are the guarantors of the rights of returning service members under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, and I am personally committed to providing each of them with our full support, recognition, and assistance. Accordingly, I hereby direct you to grant Federal employees under your authority who are returning from active duty 5 days of uncharged leave from their civilian duties, consistent with the provisions of Federal law.

We also are grateful for the extra efforts of the many Federal civilian employees